

Holter Hydroelectric Facility
House No. 4
1875 feet west of Powerhouse
Wolf Creek Vicinity
Lewis and Clark County
Montana

HAER No. MT-94-D

HAER
MONT
25-WOORE
ID -

PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HOLTER HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY,
HOUSE NO. 4

HAER
MONT
29-WOLCREE,
ID -

HAER No. MT-94-D

I. INTRODUCTION

Location: House No. 4 is located within the Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District near the small community of Wolf Creek in Lewis and Clark County, Montana. The house stands 1875 feet west of the Powerhouse in the operators' camp at the facility.

Quad: Sheep Creek

UTM: Zone 12; Easting 423020; Northing 5204450

Date of Construction: c. 1909-10

Present The Montana Power Company
40 E. Broadway
Butte, Montana 59701

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District is significant as one of the most intact hydroelectric generating plants and operators' camps on the Missouri-Madison Project. House No. 4 contributes to the significance of the district as a vernacular adaptation of a construction camp building for permanent use in the operators' camp.

Historian: Mary McCormick
Renewable Technologies, Inc.
Butte, Montana
July 1997

II. HISTORY

House No. 4 at the Holter Hydroelectric Facility was likely built by United Missouri River Power Company during the first construction phase at Holter Dam in 1909-10. It then saw reuse in the construction camp when Montana Power completed work on the project in 1916-17. Period photographs and maps show the house as a rectangular, one-story building topped by a front gable roof (Figure 1; photographs MT-94-A-7, MT-94-B-7, and MT-94-D-9).¹ A small, open porch fronted the building, a gable-roofed wing project from the rear, and a shed-roofed side porch was along the east side wall toward the rear. Like most buildings at the temporary construction camp, House No. 4 had light-weight framing members and was set on wood piers. Earth was likely piled around the foundation to provide some protection from cold winter winds blowing beneath an otherwise raised building. The building's walls and roof were covered with roofing felt. Six-over-six, double-hung windows predominated.

House No. 4 received a number of substantial improvements around the mid-1920s, during a fairly massive program by Montana Power to upgrade on-site living conditions for employees at the Holter plant.² At that time, the company appears to have excavated a basement beneath the rear wing and placed the entire building on a concrete foundation. It also re-surfaced the roof with wood shingles, sided the exterior walls with drop siding, and probably enclosed the front porch. Other improvements likely included the installation of new windows and extensive remodeling of the building's interior.³

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The operators' camp at Holter lies due west of the Powerhouse on a wide terrace backed by rolling foothills. It includes eight houses (three are non-contributing to the district), associated outbuildings, four plant and camp maintenance buildings, and a domestic water system (Figure 2). Most of the houses stand in a row and face north or northeast toward a large park that serves as a commons for the camp residents. The park is landscaped by over 150 mature trees including willows, box elders, elms, locusts and others. Each house is surrounded by a lawn, and most of them have a garden plot.

House No. 4 represents a vernacular building form. Its basic plan has not been altered since the late 1910s, except that the shed wing on the east side has been removed. The main, one-story rectangular block measures 32'4" x 38'6". The gabled-roofed wing at the rear (south) is 12'x 14'6", while the enclosed porch at the front (north) facade is 7' x 20'4". The building has been raised in recent years on a single course of concrete blocks set on an earlier concrete foundation.

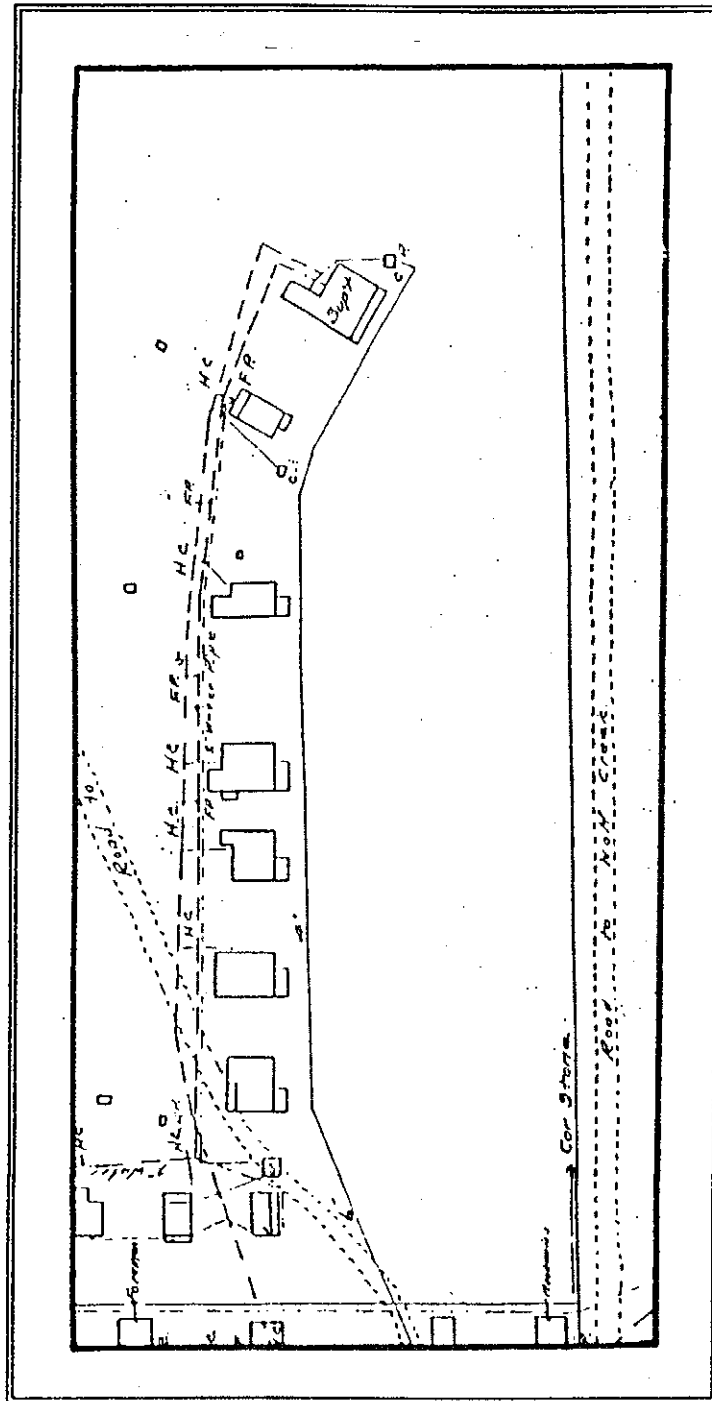


Figure 1. Portion of map reproduced on February 8, 1916 from Stone and Webster drawing. House No. 4 is the fourth building on the left. (MPC Drawing No. 17304-E)



Figure 2. Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District.

The front-gable roof at the house has a primitive truss composed of 2x4 rafters at 4-foot on center. The bottoms of the rafters are tied together by the 1x6 ceiling joists. Diagonals of 1x6s run from the ridge to the ceiling joist and back to the rafters. Board decking covers the truss system which, in turn, is sheathed by a single layer of wood shingles. Galvanized ridge rolls cap the ridges; each has ball finials at the ends. The roof eaves have a slight overhang underscored by false rafter tails behind a 3" fascia board.

The exterior walls are sheathed by drop siding with a 5" exposure. Four-inch cornerboards trim the wall corners, while 8" freize boards with bed molding delineate the wall juncture with the roof. A water table at the foundation is created by a slightly-projecting beveled drip above a 10" apron.

Most of the windows in the house likely date from the 1920s remodel. These are wood-sash double-hung units with a one-over-one light configuration. However, a few original six-over-six light, double-hung windows remain and included one unit on the east wall and two on the front (north) facade behind the porch. All of the windows have square-edge wood surrounds, and most feature a slightly projecting beveled drip at the hood.

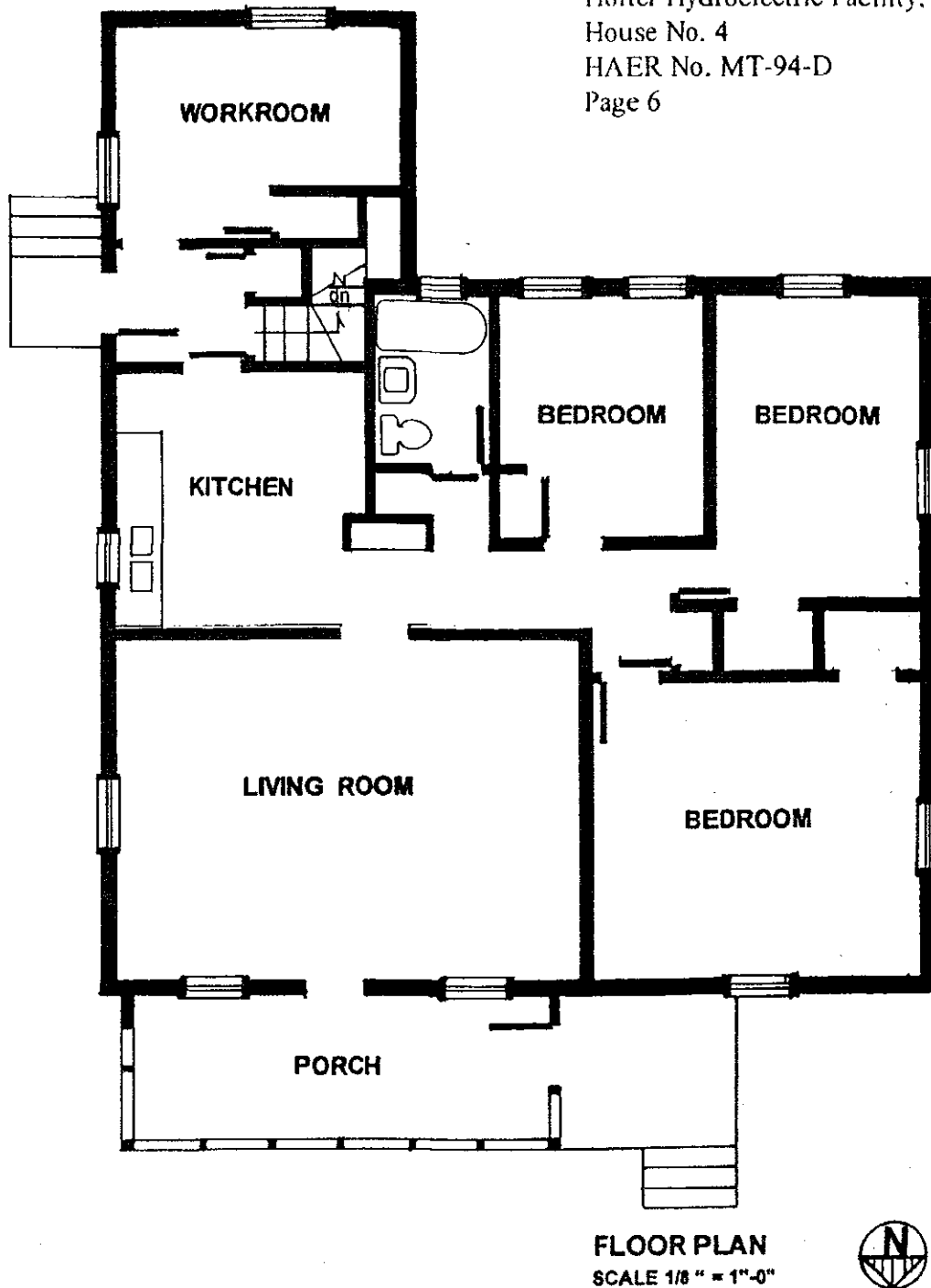
Both gable end walls have a small, louvered attic vent. The rear (south) gable end also holds a narrow, rectangular door; a ca. 1918 photograph of the house not only shows this entry but also the tall ladder that provided access to it (see MT-94-D-9). A similar-sized opening at the front (north) gable end has been in-filled with drop siding.

The partial-width porch at the front (north) facade is offset to the east. It is enclosed on all three sides by windows bands on a solid balustrade covered by drop siding. The windows are wood-sash fixed units with a thin vertical muntin. The porch has a shed roof covered by wood shingles. An entry positioned on the west wall holds a half-light wood door with three horizontal panels. This entry is fronted by a concrete stoop with three steps off to the north. A wrought-iron rail encloses the stoop.

A second entry is located on the south side of the rear wing. It has a wood door with a two-horizontal light window over three horizontal panels. This door opens out to a concrete stoop with three steps off the south. A pipe rail encloses the stoop.

The interior of the house contains six rooms and a bathroom (Figure 3). A living room and a bedroom are at the front side. Along the back there are two small bedrooms toward the west and a kitchen toward the east. The bathroom is between the kitchen and one of the back bedrooms. The rear wing encloses a workshop and the head of the basement stairs.

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HOUSE No. 4
HOLTER HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY
HISTORIC DISTRICT

Figure 3. House No. 4 Floor Plan

The livingroom and two of the bedrooms display many historic finishing elements and materials. The ceilings and walls in these rooms are sheathed by fiberboard sheets. Butt-ends of the sheets are covered by wood battens, creating a panel effect. The most elaborated batton work is found in the front bedroom. Floors in these rooms are tongue-and-grove wood boards, but those in the livingroom appear to be fairly new. Many interior doors throughout the house are historic, paneled-wood units.

Little historic fabric is evident in the other rooms in the house, as the walls, floors, and some ceilings have been covered by modern materials. No historic light fixtures remain, and the kitchen and bathroom plumbing fixtures are post-1940.

The basement is a 12-foot square room. Concrete finishes the walls and the floor. The ceiling is uncovered, exposing the flooring system at the main level. A metal post stands at the center of the room and supports a 6x4" ceiling beam.

IV. FUTURE OF THE PROPERTY

The Montana Power Company plans to demolish House No. 4 at the Holter Hydroelectric Facility (FERC Project No. 2188). The company has sponsored recording the building to the standards of the Historic American Engineering Record.

V. ENDNOTES

1. House No. 4 is at the right end of the row of four front-gabled buildings near the right center in photograph MT-94-A-7; and it is the second building from the left in the row of buildings at the center in photograph MT-94-B-7.

2. The Montana Power Company, "Index of Expenditures and Improvement Requisitions, Electric, For Years 1913 to Date," 1940, unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Record Services, Butte.

3. Many of these modifications were noted in an inspection report completed for House No. 4 in the late 1930s, see The Montana Power Company, "Reclassification of Electric Plant, Vol. No. 1," 1 January 1937, unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Property Accounting, Butte.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Montana Power Company. "General Plan of Holter Development, Reproduced from Stone & Wester Draw. No. R16100." 8 February 1916. Drawing No. 17304-E on file at The Montana Power Company, Hydro Engineering, Butte.

- _____. "Index of Expenditure and Improvements Requisitions Electric, For Years 1913 to Date." 1940. Unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Record Services, Butte.
- _____. Photograph of the Holter construction camp, 30 August 1916. In "Holter 1" photograph album on file at The Montana Power Company, Hydro Engineering, Butte.
- _____. Photograph of the Holter construction camp, November 1917. Photograph at the Holter Hydroelectric Facility, vicinity of Wolf Creek.
- _____. Photograph of dwellings at the Holter Plant, ca. 1918. Photograph on file at The Montana Power Company, Record Services, Butte.